

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY AF/P:JMPOPE:ADR

APPROVED BY AF/P:JMPOPE

AF/W - MR. BISHOP(SUBS)

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AF/EX - MR. KRYZA (INFO)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 161430

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, NI, PDIP

SUBJECT: NIGERIANS SEAL OFF U.S. EMBASSY ANNEX IN LAGOS
(PRESS GUIDANCE)

1. DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, RESPONDING TO INDIVIDUAL QUERIES
FROM NEWSMEN, USED FOLLOWING GUIDANCE THAT WAS PREPARED
FOR REGULAR PRESS BRIEFING NOT HELD JULY 9:

Q. THE WIRE SERVICES REPORT THAT NIGERIAN TROOPS HAVE
ENTERED OUR EMBASSY IN LAGOS. WHAT'S GOING ON?

A. APPROXIMATELY TWENTY NIGERIAN SOLDIERS APPEARED OUTSIDE
THE EMBASSY ANNEX LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE CHANCERY IN
DOWNTOWN LAGOS EARLY THIS MORNING AND SEALED OFF THE
BUILDING. THEY OCCUPIED THE PREMISES BUT DID NOT ENTER
THE BUILDING. EMBASSY EMPLOYEES WERE PERMITTED TO LEAVE
BUT NOT TO ENTER THE ANNEX.

OUR AMBASSADOR IN LAGOS, DONALD EASUM, HAS PROTESTED
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THIS VIOLATION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY AND RECEIVED ASSUR-

ANCES FROM THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS THAT THE
SOLDIERS WILL BE WITHDRAWN.

IF ASKED

Q. HAVE THE NIGERIAN TROOPS PULLED OUT?

A. OUR MOST RECENT INFORMATION WAS THAT THE TROOPS HAD
NOT YET BEEN WITHDRAWN.

IF ASKED

Q. HAVE YOU CALLED IN THE NIGERIAN AMBASSADOR?

A. THE NIGERIAN CHARGE EMMANUEL OBE WAS CALLED IN
BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS
NATHANIEL DAVIS AT 12:15 P.M. TODAY. MR. DAVIS PROTESTED
THIS VIOLATION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY.

Q. WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

(ON BACKGROUND) ANSWER:

THERE IS A SHORTAGE OF OFFICE SPACE IN LAGOS, AND THE
NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT HAD REQUESTED THAT WE VACATE THE
ANNEX, WHICH IT WANTED TO USE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICES. THE
BUILDING IS OWNED BY THE LAGOS STATE GOVERNMENT, BUT WE
HAVE A LEASE VALID THROUGH DECEMBER 1976. WE HAVE BEEN
NEGOTIATING WITH THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT THE TERMS UNDER
WHICH WE MIGHT TRANSFER OUR OFFICES TO OTHER QUARTERS.

Q. WHAT IS IN THE ANNEX?

A. THE OFFICES OF THE U.S. INFORMATION SERVICE, AID,
THE EMBASSY'S CONSULAR SECTION, AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE, AND
ELEMENTS OF THE ADMINISTRATION SECTION.
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